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AUTHOR McAfee, David
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ABSTRACT

To insure the success of rehabilitative education in correctional institutions, it is necessary to give these institutions the type of personnel equipped to do the job. Suggestions to train teachers for correctional institutions concern the need for a highly individual, cohesive program for each trainee; careful selection of trainees; a battery of attitudinal and behavior-measuring tests; carefully structured individualized curriculum; re-evaluation of student teaching and intern needs; and internship programs in correctional institutions. (MJM)

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TRAINING TEACHERS FOR
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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David McAfee
Secondary Ed
Mason State U
Baltimore Mont
5-7-73

Now that our teacher training institutions have changed, at least on paper, the teacher shortage to a teacher surplus, they should attempt to change their production goals from a quantity to a quality basis.

To do this, the institutions will have to recognize the need to change from a general training program with a standardized curriculum which is applied to each teacher trainee regardless of his teaching goals to a program for each teacher trainee defined individually in terms of the student population, ethnic background of the students, ^{and} ability and achievement levels of the students with whom the teacher trainee hopes to work upon completion of his training.

For example, as our society becomes increasingly aware of the fact that rehabilitation rather than punishment should be emphasized by correctional institutions, it also becomes increasingly evident that education will play a major role in the rehabilitation process.

This is illustrated by the fact that when Dr. B. S. Brown of the National Institute of Mental Health surveyed some 56,200 inmates of our correctional institutions to determine their educational background, he found that 96 percent of those surveyed were school dropouts and that 20 to 25 percent were functional illiterates.

It can be theorized from Dr. Brown's findings that a part of society's failure to make useful citizens of these people prior to their incarceration is directly related to the failure of the functional segment of our society which is responsible for the education of the men, women, and children who come to inhabit our correctional institutions to fulfill its assigned duties properly.

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While it would be easy to attempt to place the total blame for the failure of these people to achieve a satisfactory functional level within our society on education alone, it would be both unfair and foolish to do so. It would be equally as foolish to deny that the educational process in which these people participated prior to incarceration was totally blameless. Therefore, a rehabilitation program in a correctional institution which includes education as a part of its program is in trouble from the beginning if it attempts to use teachers who are trained as the great mass of teachers are trained for the simple reason that the conditions in these institutions, the backgrounds of the inmates, and the previous experiences of the inmates with the educational process create a situation entirely different from that which the ordinarily trained teacher has been prepared to cope.

In the adult institutions inmates range from the illiterate to the occasional college graduate and the educational programs and the teachers used in these programs must take this into consideration. They must also take into consideration the structure of the institutions, the backgrounds of the inmates, and the individual differences and needs of the inmates. The same things would generally have to be assumed to be true in the various childrens' correctional institutions as well.

The type of program that would have to be designed for training teachers for these institutions would have to take the above factors into consideration and would have to be very flexibly designed in order to meet the training needs of potential teachers for these institutions. These teacher trainees in turn would have to define for themselves the area or areas of rehabilitative education to which they intend to address themselves and then work with their advisors in order to define an individual training program for themselves.

The diversity of program choices available to the potential teacher is illustrated by the fact that he must choose the age group with which he wishes

to work as well as the educational level of his future students. He must then begin a training program which emphasizes working with and teaching either adults or children of various ages, which also familiarizes him with the teaching materials and methods for his chosen level, thoroughly familiarizes him with the psychology and sociology of the inmates with whom he will be working, and gives him a knowledge of the history, internal workings, and environment of correctional institutions. He also must be instructed in such a manner as to achieve skill in the handling of aggressive inmates or inmates with varying behavior problems. He should acquire a knowledge of the other staff of a correctional institution and their duties for the purpose of relating to them and their positions, and he should have a knowledge of the dynamics of delinquency and crime causation especially in the familial and group peer pressure situations.* The number of combinations and possibilities for individualizing the curriculum for each trainee are virtually without limit as is obvious from the above yet there are also areas of commonality which will be a necessary part of the studies of all trainees.

In addition to a highly individual, yet cohesive program for each trainee, the process for the selection of the trainees must be oriented toward the selection of individuals who are suited for a specialized training program such as this program would be and who are, moreover, acceptable to their prospective employers, the correctional institutions. The need for a selection process which can discriminate among candidates for trainee status is inherent in the nature of the position for which the trainee will be preparing himself. For instance, he must train for work in an unusual setting, he must be able to interact with persons who are usually of a different socio-economic and,

*A number of the above suggestions are from a memorandum from Dr. Dennis Anderson of the Southern Illinois University Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections to the author.

oftentimes, different ethnic background than his own and this interaction must be of a positive nature. He must also be able to differentiate between the need for honest concern for inmates and their rehabilitation and indiscriminate and perhaps damaging sympathy for the inmates. It follows, then, that trainees must have the characteristic of a stable personality coupled with a high degree of emotional maturity and the ability to handle out of the ordinary situations.

To select trainees of this caliber, it will be necessary to establish a strong, carefully controlled and well-planned process to discriminate among the applicants. In its initial stages, an early weeding out process for removing unsuitable applicants might be simply sending the prospective trainee, as soon as he declares his interest in the program, to spend a week working with a teacher in a correctional institution and becoming familiar with the institution and its inmates. Undoubtedly, many of the more naive prospects will withdraw their applications after this experience.

For those that continue their interest in becoming trainees, the taking of a battery of attitudinal and behavior measuring tests could be the next step. Upon the successful completion of these tests, the candidate could then furnish several written evaluations of the quality of his work and the social-interactive aspects of his character. These evaluations could be written by acquaintances, former supervisors or teachers and by the applicant himself. The test scores and evaluations could be used by a committee which would then make the final decision regarding the applicant's suitability for the program. This committee preferably would contain representatives of the college or school of education involved, faculty members from the various academic areas outside of education which are most intimately involved in the program, and, most importantly, representatives of nearby correctional institutions, preferably those institutions whose inmates are representative of the population to which the applicant

intends to offer his services.

Combining a carefully structured individualized curriculum with an equally structured selection process for trainees would not necessarily mean that a new department or division would need to be established to guide the training of the trainees nor would the program call for an unnecessarily large number of new courses or procedures to be used in the training of teachers for correctional institutions. However, a college might need to restructure its thinking concerning the training of teachers to a considerable extent before it could successfully execute this type of program. Courses stressing methods and materials for use in teaching adults, courses for training teachers to deal with both adult and child illiterates, and courses which emphasize cultural and ethnic problems in teaching could be developed but these need not be limited to use only in this program. Indeed, some of these courses are badly needed now for the training of our prospective teachers who will be dealing with adults who are returning to school in ever increasing numbers to complete or to continue their education and with the children in at least some of the schools in almost all of our larger school districts and in many of the smaller districts as well.

The current practice of student teaching or interning almost anywhere regardless of the trainee's needs will also have to be, as it should indeed be, re-evaluated. The trainee who is going to teach in a correctional institution should intern in one at the very least, and probably should spend a considerable period of time working in one as an aide or in some other capacity prior to the time he begins his teacher internship.

In a ^{Statement of Policy} ~~speech~~, the ^{Former} Attorney General of the United States, John Mitchell, emphasized that an updating of the penitentiary systems in the United States and particularly of the rehabilitative aspects of those systems would receive top priority in the future. In many states, recent legislation has placed

emphasis on the rehabilitative aspects of the penal systems in those states as opposed to the punishment aspects. However, both the Federal and the state systems still have a long way to go to move out of the dark ages of penology. The Universities which serve to train the new breed of penal officer, or rather correctional or rehabilitative personnel, must keep up with all aspects of the modernization of penology offering a product in the form of suitably trained personnel to those penal systems which are awakening to the need for and beginning their first few faltering steps toward the new role the correctional institutions must play. This role, as is stated above, includes a rehabilitative process for inmates which in turn includes a strong and active role for education as a part of the rehabilitative process. Correctional institutions must have more success in educating inmates than the public schools had in dealing with them before they became inmates. To achieve this success, they must have specially selected and specially trained personnel who will succeed in an educational process that will replace the educational process to which the inmates were exposed prior to incarceration and which had a 95 per cent record of failure.

The best way to insure the success of rehabilitative education in correctional institutions is to give these institutions the type of personnel needed and to train them to do the job. The selection process described earlier in this article and the general training program also outlined, if put into operation by a qualified and farsighted educational institution, could go a long way toward insuring the success of any educational endeavor undertaken as a part of an overall rehabilitation program within a correctional institution.